

Preface

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シリーズタイトル(英)	I.J.R.P. Series
シリーズ番号	6
journal or publication title	Digital Divide or Digital Jump : Beyond 'IT' Revolution
page range	iii-iv
year	2002
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2344/00014863

PREFACE

This volume is the product of a research project entitled "Information Technology (IT): From Hierarchical to Network Globalization," which was coordinated and financially supported by the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

The appearance of the Internet has greatly advanced the convergence of telecommunications and computers. Cellular phones that can connect to the Internet have widened our lifestyles. Broadband access that allows us to enjoy moving images such as movies/videos has also expanded our convenience and amenity. While online businesses have been spreading rapidly, too. The convergence of broadcasting and computers is arriving as digitization of TV goes forward. And, although the IT Revolution's momentum has been slowed, at least temporarily, by the US dot com recession, the direction is irreversible.

This IT Revolution has brought about drastic changes to our society. Particularly, the Internet, a one-to-one communication tool, has produced horizontal flows of communications at a personal, firm, and global level. This transcendence of time, location, position and even class has had a tremendous impact on our lives. Last year IDE thoroughly overviewed these impacts of the IT Revolution (please refer to Mitsuhiro Kagami and Masatsugu Tsuji, eds., *The 'IT' Revolution and Developing Countries: Late-comer Advantage?*, IDE/JETRO, 2001). This year the same commanding study group tackled more specific issues such as connectivity pricing, broadband diffusions, standards, and the digital divide in order to deepen our understanding of the IT Revolution. Country coverage includes India, Korea, Thailand, South Africa, Central and Eastern Europe (especially, Estonia), Latin America (especially, Argentina and Mexico) as well as developed countries such as Japan, Europe, and the US.

As in the previous year, three study teams were organized (Japan, the UK and the US) and assigned to provide insights to the above-mentioned issues as well as case studies in developing countries. Team leaders (L) and team members are listed below.

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We held an international workshop for the project on December 4-5, 2001. Together with Japan team members, Professors Emanuele Giovannetti and Soon-Yong Choi participated in the workshop. Four commentators, Professor Kiyoshi Nakamura (School of Commerce, Waseda University), Professor Shigehiko Naoe (Faculty of Policy Studies, Chuo University), Associate Professor Takuo Imagawa (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University), and Mr. Tsuyoshi Nakai (Director-General, Planning and Coordination Department, JETRO) also took part in the workshop. We are grateful to all participants for their stimulating comments and contributions on the occasion.

Special thanks go to Professor Masatsugu Tsuji who effectively coordinated the entire project. Our thanks also go to Mr. John Gallagher for his English proofreading and editing work and Ms. Kumiko Sakumoto for her administrative support.

Any opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and not of the organizations they are affiliating to.

March 2002

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